



**Request for Responses
Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
Community Biodiversity Grants FY2027**

COMMBUYS #: BD-26-1046-COM-COM1-129396

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/massachusetts-community-biodiversity-grants>

DEADLINE TO APPLY: JUNE 24, 2026, AT 11:59 PM

1. GRANT OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY

A. OVERVIEW AND GOALS:

The Community Biodiversity Grants Program is designed to support the [Massachusetts Biodiversity Goals](#), pursuant to [Executive Order 618: Biodiversity Conservation in Massachusetts](#). The Department of Fish and Game (“DFG” or the “Department”) seeks grant proposals from public and non-public entities, such as municipalities, state agencies, not-for-profit organizations, tribal governments, museums, or academic institutions for projects to support the implementation of these Goals, including baseline biodiversity assessments and projects in support of biodiversity conservation, restoration, awareness, or education in Massachusetts. This grant targets projects or phases of projects must be completed before June 30, 2027.

Massachusetts recognizes that biodiversity, and healthy ecosystems, supports our way of life and helps make our state a great place to live. Smaller scale projects support larger goals, and as such a key action under the Biodiversity Goals is to support community-based biodiversity projects.

Eligible projects will fall under one or more of the [Biodiversity Goals of Protect, Restore, Sustain, and Connect](#). Eligible project types include, but are not limited to, biodiversity assessments and related planning/implementation (e.g., marine species surveys as they relate to protection and restoration; vernal pool surveys and certification); dark skies related projects that reduce light pollution in areas important for biodiversity; design and installation of pollinator gardens or forests (e.g., seed purchases, watering station installation) and associated educational signage; design, planning, permitting, and implementation of small-scale habitat improvement/restoration projects; and educational tools and museum exhibits focused on the biodiversity of Massachusetts. Projects that score the highest will demonstrate both a benefit to biodiversity and have a strong community engagement component. Projects must have a public benefit.

Below are a few more examples – there are many ways your organization can support these goals!

- **PROTECT**—identify and protect local biodiversity through biodiversity surveys, including innovative survey equipment, and creation of biodiverse spaces.
- **RESTORE**—restore habitat through restoration, trash and derelict fishing gear clean up equipment, native plantings, planning and implementation of exterior lighting that reduces light pollution, and other projects.
- **SUSTAIN**—support restoration of local foodways, including plantings and equipment needed to support donation of Massachusetts harvested wild foods.
- **CONNECT**—support projects that support nature in every neighborhood, such as biodiversity murals and community art projects, museum exhibits, educational materials, volunteer efforts and participatory science, and other educational tools, binoculars and birding books in libraries.

B. PROPOSALS SOUGHT FOR:

DFG will provide grants between \$20,000 and \$150,000 to eligible organizations to further Massachusetts Biodiversity Goals.

C. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

Eligible applicants for this grant opportunity include public and non-public entities, such as municipalities, state agencies, non-profit organizations (501(c)(3)), tribal governments, museums, or academic institutions.

D. APPLICATION DEADLINE:

This grant opportunity is for projects or phases of projects that must be completed on or before June 30, 2027 (FY27). The deadline for applications is Wednesday June 24, 2026, at 11:59 PM.

E. FUNDING AVAILABILITY:

A total of up to \$1.25 million dollars of funding is currently available for FY27, at the discretion of the Commissioner. Grant requests must be between \$20,000 and \$150,000. The project begins on the date of full execution of the grant award and must be completed on or before June 30, 2027. DFG may award up to the full amount of funds available but reserves the right, in its discretion, to award smaller amounts and more grants. DFG may elect not to award the total funding currently available during this grant opportunity. In addition, DFG reserves the right to increase award amounts, issue additional awards, or to initiate additional funding rounds, in the event that additional or unspent funds become available for this program. All awards are subject to the availability of funds.

F. BUDGET REQUIREMENT:

Applicants must submit a proposed budget for grant funded activities using the budget form provided. The budget must clearly indicate proposed grant funded expenses separately from other expenses. If an Applicant is proposing a Sub-Recipient, Applicant is required to identify the entity and include similar scope and budget details. A Sub-recipient is any entity that receives designated grant funding, or sub-award, from a Grantee to assist in achieving the defined public purpose within a grant. Approved Sub-recipients shall be included in the Commonwealth's Standard Contract Form and Scope of Work.

G. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS:

Eligible projects will include capital projects or improvements that fall under one or more of the four Goals and may include, but are not limited to, biodiversity assessments and related implementation (e.g., species surveys; migratory species tracking and associated habitat corridor planning); design and installation of light pollution reduction or mitigation projects (i.e., outdoor lighting that minimizes light pollution); design and installation of pollinator gardens (e.g., seed purchases, watering station installation); design, planning, permitting, and implementation of small-scale habitat improvement/restoration projects (e.g., river clean-ups and installation of trash booms; derelict fishing gear removal); design and construction of museum exhibits supporting Massachusetts biodiversity; durable educational materials related to biodiversity. Eligible Projects must specify how the funds will be used for implementation of Biodiversity Goals.

H. NOT ELIGIBLE:

Sales tax; staff; overhead costs; indirect costs; purchase of land; food/beverages; t-shirts or branded clothing, with the exception of specific equipment such as hip-waders which

will be used year after year; other purchases that are ephemeral in nature such as journals or pencils; and construction materials not directly related to biodiversity are not eligible expenses. Projects centered on non-native species, such as honeybees or European beech trees, are not eligible.

I. MATCH:

No specific match is required for this funding; however, in-kind and cash matches are encouraged.

J. COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS:

DFG is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and access to nature through its public investments. To that end, DFG grant and funding programs include criteria and evaluation parameters that help describe community characteristics, including diversity, income, and access to nature as well as biodiversity resources. Preference will be given to projects that detail both human and ecological community characteristics, including how they relate to biodiversity.

K. FUNDING AND PAYMENTS:

This is a cost reimbursement grant program. Reimbursements will be based upon proof of actual expenditures. Reimbursement shall only be for expenses up to the approved grant amount, and in accordance with the approved project budget. Grantees must pay costs and then submit reimbursement requests. Reimbursement requests must include both invoices / receipts and proof of payment. Reimbursement requests can be monthly or every two months.

All grant funds must be used for eligible activities in accordance with the approved grant budget. Grant payments will only be made up to the approved grant amount or the actual approved expenditure amount, whichever is less. Staffing is not eligible, and see “G” above for other ineligible expenses. All contracts shall be subject to available funding, whether through the appropriation and authorization of sufficient funds or the receipt of sufficient revenues. If available funding ceases for any reason, a contract shall be deemed under suspension and contract performance must halt. A contractor will not be entitled to compensation for any performance provided during the period of contract suspension. DFG may lift the suspension if available funding is received. In the absence of foreseeable available funding, DFG may terminate the contract.

DFG reserves the right to include additional or more specific reporting, documentation, invoicing, or site visit requirements, in any contract or scope of work executed in support of

a grant award issued through this program. Payments are processed within a 45-day payment cycle through EFT, in accordance with the Commonwealth Bill Paying Policy. Grant reimbursement will be made using Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Final fiscal year invoices are due July 31 each year.

L. TOTAL ANTICIPATED DURATION OF GRANT(S):

The grant duration begins upon execution of grant contract and ends on June 30, 2027. All approved project costs must be expended by June 30, 2027.

M. GRANT DELIVERABLES:

Upon completion of the project, or with submission of the final request for payment, all grantees shall submit a final report summarizing their project tasks, including links to or copies of the work product completed during the contract period. The Report shall also include all data collected, if a project that collects data, included as an appendix and in an electronic format specified by the Department, a final expense report, and a summary of additional work needed to complete the project if work remains after the contract end date. Photographs should also be included. DFG reserves the right to request additional materials, information, or other documentary evidence demonstrating completion of work and/or compliance with program. DFG also reserves the right to withhold funding until receipt and acceptance of satisfactory materials, information, or other documentary evidence demonstrating completion of work and/or compliance with program requirements. Final requests for payment and reports are due 30 days upon completion of the contract.

N. BUDGET REQUIREMENT:

Applicants selected for funding must provide both a proposed budget and final report that includes the total expenses (by category) and grant funded expenses (by category).

O. GRANT PROMOTION & OUTREACH:

Grantees must include DFG and the Biodiversity Logo in outreach materials, including signage, educational materials, and social media. Upon award of the grants, DFG will issue a formal press release announcement and provide an outreach toolkit to awardees. Additionally, DFG encourages grantees to issue their own press release and/or announcement on social media. Throughout the duration of the project, DFG welcomes grantees to continue to promote their projects on social media and encourages collaboration on Instagram with the @massachusettsbiodiversity account. Following the

completion of the project, grantees are encouraged to share their impact with press, partners, and social media.

P. APPLICABLE PROCUREMENT LAW:

Grants – MGL c. 7A, § 7; St. 1986 c. 206, § 17; 815 CMR 2.00.

Q. CONTACT INFORMATION:

Jennifer Ryan, Assistant Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game.
Jennifer.Ryan@mass.gov.

2. APPLICATION INFORMATION

Application Deadline:

Applications are due by June 24, 2026, 11:59 PM EST.

R. Required Information:

In order to be considered for a grant award, applicants must submit a completed application that: (1) includes a completed application cover sheet (Attachment A); (2) affirmatively commits to completing the project on or before June 30, 2027; and (3) meets the eligibility requirements.

- Applications must also address the Project Evaluation Criteria in 10 pages or less: Project Description (20 points); Project Benefit (30 points); Qualifications of Project Team and Organization (20 points); Budget and Timeline (20 points); Community Characteristics (10 points). Eligible grantees selected for funding must provide both a proposed budget and final report that includes the total expenses (by category) and grant funded expenses (by category).
- If the proposed project is on a site not owned or under the care of the applicant, please submit a letter of landowner permission. For example, if:
 - the project is in partnership with a town, or conservation commission, or other land-owning entity please submit letters of support from those entities.
 - the project is on state agency land, for example the Department of Conservation and Recreation or MassWildlife, and the applicant is not from that agency (for example, a Friends Group or Scouts), please submit a letter of support from the appropriate staff person at that state agency.
- Please submit a list of state or local permits, if any, and timeline associated with those permits if needed for the proposed project.

- Please submit a screen shot of a topographic and/or aerial map of the proposed project site/s, along with town or site names and showing any protected areas, if relevant.

S. Application Submission:

Applicants must submit the application via [online form](#) by June 24, 2026, 11:59 PM EST. Online form is here: <https://www.mass.gov/forms/fy27-community-biodiversity-grants-program-application-form>.

T. Opportunity to Submit Written Questions:

Applicants may submit written questions via [online form](#) by May 29, 2026, at 5:00 PM EST. All submitted questions and DFG’s official answers will be posted on COMMBUYS by June 5, 2026. See the grant calendar below. Question form here: <https://www.mass.gov/forms/fy27-community-biodiversity-grants-qa>.

Please note that DFG cannot accept or respond to substantive questions regarding this grant opportunity after May 29, 2026, question submission deadline.

U. Ownership of Equipment or Other Resources Paid for with Grant Funds:

Equipment or other resources paid for with grant funds shall be owned and maintained solely by the Grantee, unless otherwise negotiated between DFG and the Grantee pursuant to a Grant Award Contract.

V. Compliance with Other Applicable State or Federal Legislative, Regulatory or Policy Requirements:

All potential applicants are advised that through submission of an application, the applicant agrees to be responsible for compliance with all federal, state, or local permitting, regulatory, policy, guidance, or other requirements in the event of a successful application. **Please submit a list required state or local permits and expected dates that those permits would be received with your application, if permits are needed. If no permits are needed, please state.**

3. INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION

W. Required Information:

In order to be considered for a grant award, applicants must (1) submit a completed application and budget form; (2) affirmatively commit to completing the project on or before June 30, 2027; and (3) meet the eligibility requirements. Landowner permission and relevant permit information is also required (see **2B** above). If landowner permission is not included, where needed, a project application will be considered incomplete.

Applications must also address the Project Evaluation Criteria in **10 pages or less**: *Project Description* (20 points); *Project Benefit* (30 points); *Qualifications of Project Team and Organization* (20 points); *Budget and Timeline* (20 points); *Community Characteristics* (10 points).

Evaluation Criteria: A review committee will evaluate proposals based upon the criteria listed below – applicants must address each of the criteria in their application. The review committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

a. *Project Description (20 points)*

- i. How well does the project, as described, meet the Biodiversity Goals and Objectives? (10 points)
- ii. Does the project description include proposed project tasks, personnel, and desired outcome(s) for the project? What metrics will be used to measure a successful outcome? (5 points)
- iii. Does the project description include a discussion of deliverables, including but not limited to a report that details how the funds are allocated and the results of the project? (5 points)

b. *Project Benefit (30 points)*

- i. How well does the applicant demonstrate the biodiversity benefits from the project? For projects like pollinator gardens, this includes organizational capacity to maintain the site beyond the grant period. (15 points)
- ii. How well does the applicant demonstrate that the project will expand public understanding and appreciation of biodiversity? Applicants should include specific information on visitation numbers or other relevant information. (15 points)

c. *Qualifications of Project Team and Organization (20 points)*

- i. How well does the applicant demonstrate the qualifications of the organization to carry out the proposed work? Does the applicant demonstrate a track record of accomplishing similar projects? (10 points)
- ii. Does the applicant demonstrate a sound governance structure and record of fiscal responsibility? (10 points)

d. *Budget and Timeline (20 points)*

- i. How well does the applicant demonstrate a realistic understanding of project costs by providing a budget with detailed and credible cost estimates? (10 points)
- ii. For proposed future work, how well does the applicant describe the timeline for the proposed work? Is it demonstrated that the work can feasibly be completed by the end of the contract? (10 points)

e. *Community Characteristics (10 points)*

- i. How well does the applicant describe community characteristics and how the project improves access to or understanding of biodiversity? DFG will use information from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs [Environmental Justice Map Viewer](#), MassDEP [Disadvantaged Community Designation](#), [Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Program Guide for Equitable and Actionable Resilience \(GEAR\) tool](#), [Massachusetts BioMap](#), and any additional information regarding community characteristics provided on the application form to make this determination.

X. Application Completion and Submission Instructions

All grant applicants must submit completed applications 11:59 PM EST on June 24, 2026, and include a cover sheet (Attachment A), a full project proposal of no more than a 10 pages, and budget proposal (Attachment B).

Applications received after the deadline will be rejected automatically. DFG reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or request additional information, if needed.

Y. Additional Required Documentation

If selected for a grant award, the applicant will be required to submit the following forms to complete the grant award contracting process. Forms are found at www.macomptroller.org/forms and will be provided by DFG fiscal.

- Commonwealth Standard Contract Form filled out and signed by the applicant.
- Commonwealth Terms and Conditions. These Terms and Conditions are incorporated by reference into the Standard Contract Form, and do not need to be executed separately.
- Commonwealth W-9 tax information form filled out and signed by the applicant with DUNS number and Federal Tax ID
- Completed Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing Form
- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) form
- Scope of Work

Applicants are encouraged to review these forms prior to submission of an application.

4. ESTIMATED CALENDAR FOR GRANT APPLICATION/AWARD

EVENT	DATE	TIME
Grant Application Release Date <i>(posted on COMMBUYS)</i>	May 15, 2026	
Deadline for Submission of Written Questions <i>(via online form)</i>	May 29, 2026	5:00 p.m.
Estimated Publication of Official Answers to Submitted Questions <i>(published on COMMBUYS)</i>	June 5, 2026	
Grant Opportunity & Application Amendment Deadline <i>(if applicable updated documents will be published on COMMBUYS)</i>	June 12, 2026	5:00 p.m.
Deadline for Submission of Grant Proposals <i>(via online form)</i>	June 24, 2026	11:59 p.m.
Estimated Announcement of Grant Selection/Award Results <i>(posted on COMMBUYS and via email)</i>	September 15, 2026	

Estimated Contract Start Date

October 15, 2026